

Grains That The Huskers Lost

SAMUEL SCHIERLOH



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Schierloh — Grains That The Huskers Lost — talaria

GRAINS THAT THE HUSKERS LOST

by

SAMUEL SCHIERLOH

Here are poems of exceptional integrity, gleaned from the intriguingly contrasting experiences of the boy in the country, the youth at sea, and the quietly observing official on the other side of the window in the U. S. post-office.

This is a first collection. The lines are pervaded by an achieved philosophy and express an individualism with distinctive re-straint. Unmistakable awareness and depth of feeling are disciplined by the terse phrase.

The “lost grains” gleaned by Mr. Schierloh are well worth treasuring – something to hold long in memory.

Samuel Schierloh has a sense of the values of the little vagrant emotions a less modest poet might ignore; and no scene, no object is so small he will not turn his magnifying glass to it to see
If perhaps something worth telling about has been going unnoticed.
It's a surprising glass.

JAMES T. GOLDEN –
The Cincinnati Enquirer.

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By
SAMUEL SCHIERLOH

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Mother – Poets' Forum – Talaria – Westminster –
Wings.

*To my wife and daughters,
LEONIE, MILDRED, and AMY,
this book
is dedicated*

Cover Illustration — Mildred Wheatley

Times-Star Tower,
October 15, 1940

Samuel Schierloh is a man's poet. In convincing and at times almost diverting fashion, the present volume declares it. His favorite birds are crows. "Wind-drunken crows in the willows" is the most lyrical of several references to this somber fowl. Gulls come next in order of preference. Neither crows nor gulls are songsters. The poet also thinks well of the blackbird, whose musicianship is in dispute, of the honking wild goose, and of bobwhite, which is a songbird in some States, a game bird in others. Afterward, a long way afterward, if at all, comes the familiar array of tuneful feathered creatures which most women writers and some of us men-folk like to discant upon. Also, and to the same end, is the superior ranking which weeds, blackberry bushes and cornfields have in the author's affections over the dainty products of Victorian flower gardens.

His major interests, however, as a poet's might well be, are in those two elemental things, the sea and the sky. He knows the former from intimate companionship, the latter obviously from study in which admiration and wonder have gone hand in hand. In five years of service in the navy and merchant marine, he sailed all the Seven Seas. The result is a number of vigorous lyrics, together with a fondness for lesser waters, as witness the poem beginning "Packet panting up a moonlit stream," which has long been one of my favorites. From the decks of ships upon seas far away he must have watched the constellations; in high procession they move through his pages.

I like the way he sets down what he has seen and thought, “emotion recollected in tranquility,” in Wordsworth’s well-known line. His lines sing, and some of them have found their way into song. To newspaper editors like myself, whose task is to pass upon submitted verse, his infallible terseness is source of a satisfaction that sometimes approaches joy. The superfluous word is his definition of Public Enemy Number One. Almost frugal are his sketches of scenes and moods, yet they tell it all. I salute a true poet.

CLARK B. FIRESTONE

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Deathless

Only a lad with a dream as he plays,
And a lad's own heart for yearning;
Oh, the dreamer's ways are the nights and days
That go, but have their returning.

Night and the stars were the dream of a Soul,
And the sun was of His desire ...
And the planets roll in an ether bowl
Still charged with an ancient fire.

Three Poems

I

The boy went a-berrying with a basket and pail,
Then neglected the berries to pipe up the quail;
Came home empty-handed but heart filled with song
That echoed, still echoes, all the years long.

II

He said he'd walk unflinchingly
Into a world of steel;
A stalwart little blade of grass
Held tightly to his heel.

III

Here is the street, hard-paved and merciless,
Where once ran down a white and dusty road;
Here is the spot where bare feet turned aside,
Rather than frighten butterfly or toad.

Snow-Man

Boys made a snow-man,
Then ran away;
Too many pleasures
Called them today.

Lone little snow-man,
Heart growing cold;
Slowly the fire
Dies round the mold.

Here am I, stopping,
Glad that I came ...
Just an old fellow
Fanning a flame.

Rustic Dreamer

All day I plowed the stubble,
All day since early morn;
Around and 'round, but dreaming
Of other things than corn.

Tonight my window lures me
Away from dreams of sleep;
The trees across the landscape
Are ships upon the deep.

I peer out on Arcturus
Suspended in the west;
The sea lies there beneath him,
I feel its throbbing breast.

I dream of some old clipper
And chests of china tea;
I hear the tradewinds sighing,
They're calling, calling me.

I yearn to see Canopus
Swing 'round the southern sky,
Or watch from shining foc'sle
An albatross soar by.

I want to race to England
From China 'round the Horn
But there's Arcturus sinking ...
And dreams return to corn.

River Packet

Packet panting up a moonlit stream,
Gangplank yearning for a magic shore;
Captain strolling in a land of dream,
Banjo music through a galley door.

Smokestacks vieing for the yellow moon,
Sternwheel working like a treadmill slave;
Deckhand stepping to a Dixie tune,
Dream-bubbles sinking to a watery grave.

Silver ripples and the moon at play,
Willows whispering to the owl in flight;
Lonely traveler resumes his way,
Packet swallowed in the pit of night.

Tramp Ship

Weary wanderer of the sea,
Returned from Mystery-land,
Laden down so heavily,
By unsung heroes manned—
Was it not but yesterday
Beneath the torrid sky
Of Zanzibar you stole away
And left me with a sigh?

Did I not hear your rumbling chain
In Nome when all was still,
Waking me to calls again
Of lark and whippoorwill?
Weary wanderer of the sea
Dreaming by the mooring line—
Rest for you must never be ...
Sail on! the harbor now is mine

Windjammer Weighs Anchor

There's a rumbling of chain, there's a foc'sle refrain,
There's a wind, and it sings of the sea;
There's a tide running out, there's a lull, there's a shout ...
And a windjammer's ready for sea.

It is "anchor's away," and she glides down the bay,
Down the bay to the wide open sea;
From the spokes from her wheel the slime of her keel
She is laid for the wide open sea.

What are cares on the land when her timbers are manned
By the bone and the blood of the sea!
Let the landsman ashore keep the wolf from the door ...
What is that to the blood of the sea!

Now her canvas is filled, now the voices are stilled,
And the night is at one with the sea;
And the march of the stars on the quivering spars
Is the watch of good angels at sea.

Let the hurricane's blast tear to shreds every mast,
Let her decks be awash with the sea;
Not a landsman shall know of the pride or the woe
That is hers when she yields to the sea.

Mistress of the Seas

On the starboard beam lay a rugged coast,
And stern Aconcagua kept
Above the gray Andean host
A vigil as morning crept.

The swans of night were gliding on
To hover the Antipodes,
When the silver trumpets of the dawn
Announced "The Mistress of the Seas."

Her five masts towered to the clouds,
Her graceful yardarms squared;
Her broad sails hid her lofty shrouds
In splendor...majestic, weird.

What harbor saw her anchor rise,
What yearning shore her destiny;
What cargo under hatches lies
In that white hull of mystery?

Her tops'ls have dropped below the rim,
And the trade-winds call in vain—
"Sigh on forever, your plaintive hymn
Shall never enchant her again."

Song of the Wanderlust

I hear the swish of the restless sea
And the tradewind's sad refrain;
And a goodly ship drives full and free
Through the spindrift, mist and rain.
Oh, we're outward bound for Java,
For a cargo rich with jade;
Oh, we'll dig through streams of lava
Where the Buddha's gems are laid.

The porpoise dives beneath our keel
Like a playful water-sprite;
And ever on we plunge and reel,
And sing by day and dream by night.
Oh, we're beating around the Horn
With our canvas shortened down,
And our faces all unshorn...
Oh, we're bound for Bombay town.

I feel the spell of the rolling waves
And I hear the pounding swell,
It rushes in and out the caves
Where coral mermaids dwell.
Oh, it's yo ho ho for Bombay,
Oh, it's yo ho for Papeete,
And we won't come back till some day
When the nowdays are complete.

Gulls

I have seen gulls
In a blue bay
Riding the roads...
The wind-roads to labor,
And the wave-roads to play.

I have seen blue gulls,
And white gulls, and gray,
Racing after whitecaps...
Only to find them
Washed seaward away.

I have seen lone gulls,
And sad gulls, and gay;
Wonder-eyed at cargos
When the ships come in...
And I saw the window-shoppers
In the city streets today.

City Street

The city street is an ocean lane,
Where strong ships, frail ships,
Battle the main.

Where some on their courses
Dauntless ride,
And some drift in
On the mercy-tide.

The hungry shoals hold their mouths agape
For captains blindly
Rounding the cape.
O masters all
Of the mighty fleet,
Stand by! Stand by!
In the city street.

To the “Five and Ten” Girl

I like to think that on a golden street
There’s such a place as this,
Where *you* may stroll
Through heavenly days
On never-tiring feet,
Buying bright trinkets, or a china bowl.

And then I think that I should like to see
An angel waiting near
A crowded aisle,
As sweetly patient as you’ve been with me—
To sell *you* bits of tinsel with a smile.

Sand-Blaster

The boss said,
“Make of this grimy mass
An ivory mansion;
Blast the scars from its face,
So that tomorrow
It may look upon the Boulevard
Without shame.”

Now a job is a job these days,
And a fellow has to guard his tongue;
But ten years ago
I'd have given the boss a piece of my mind.
I'd have asked him point-blank,
“What about the scars in the heart of this thing,
Scars that the wind and the rain never made?”

But a job is a job these days.

General Delivery Window

Cloaked in mystery they come,
In groups, in families, and some
Alone.

Like the four winds that rise
Beneath far troubled skies,
Unknown
They reach this common spot,
Each burdened with his lot,
His own.

Here expectation's reign
Collapses and a moment's pain
Betrays;
Here is timidity, and here
Is courage, here is fear
That slays.
Ofttimes outpours a soul
In silence, weary of the role
That flays.

Flotsam, jetsam, in parade,
Whose footfalls are the drumbeats played
Apace;
A never-ending picture, still
Who may its fancied story tell
Or trace?
Yes, cloaked in mystery they come...
Some leaving but a name...and some—
A face.

The Postman

I never hear him outside my door
Stepping across my veranda floor
Leaving a thin white letter or two,
A friendly message or a bill that's due...
Without conviction that one sure day
He will pass my gate on his burdened way;
My blinds all drawn and my house as still
As the heap of earth on yonder hill.

But I shall watch from my conning tower,
Now wreathed in many a withered flower—
With the same old hopes I'll watch and wait,
To meet the postman at Heaven's Gate.

Night News Vendor

If I would put my courage to the test,
To learn the stoutness of my heart, the best
That's in me when the odds are at their worst,
How I might act when the last bubble burst...
I'd find the coldest, darkest city street
Some winter night, and stand on frozen feet
Till morning, yelling, "Paper! Here you are!
Who wants a paper? All about the war!"
I'd carry on through rain and sleet and snow,
And munch a soggy doughnut on the go.
I'd look the pity-minded fellow in the eye
With an indifferent stare, I'd ask him high
And mighty-like, "Well, sir, is business good?"
He'd never know just how my business stood.

Yes, selling papers on a winter night
Should test a man's ability to fight...
But, then, I think I'll try another plan—
That does not call for quite so good a man.

At End of Day

The busses come into the Square
For tired men and ladies fair;
For dainty girls and brawny boys,
And children with their tinsel toys.

The busses groan beneath their loads
But climb the hills to homeward roads,
Where glowing lamp and open gate
In hushed expectancy await.

Elsinore Tower

A late moon sinking;
Pale yellow rays
Drifting above the miradors;
In the moonlight, faintly gleaming,
Proudly erect behind the parapets,
A coat of mail, visored helmet,
Poised spear;
All that passion, courage, chivalry,
Ever meant;
The symbol of mastery—
Companion in back seat exclaims,
“Well, why don’t you go?
You have the green light.”

Highways

Wheels, wheels, wheels, wheels!
Turning and spurning
And racing and chasing
And grinding and winding
And all interlacing;
This is the highway agog with the wheels.

Eyes, eyes, eyes, eyes!
Seeing and fleeing
And staring and baring,
Beguiling and smiling
And daring and erring;
This is the highway aflood with the eyes.

Hearts, hearts, hearts, hearts!
Eluding and brooding
And breaking and waking
And thirsting and bursting,
Forsaking and aching;
That spin the swift wheels for a bauble or prize,
That win, draw, or lose by the light in their eyes;
This is the highway twixt hell and the skies.

My Estate

Down the open road I go,
Breathing the sweetness of a summer day;
Inhaling now a breath of timothy,
And now a sudden stream of wine
From the rambling blackberry.
The young corn emits a perfume
Delicate enough for a queen's bosom,
And I partake of it, freely.
The southwind travels high and low
Pouring its spicy spray
Upon the absorbing woods
And me.
The balsams and the beeches
Blow their strength into my chest;
I stand before them in exaltation;
How I expand as I breathe.

I follow the highway, listening...
A bob-white hails from a clump of sassafras;
Emerging from the oak-shadows
I am welcomed by the lark;
Over-head, high in a hackberry
A blackbird greets me in his own gay fashion.
A staring cow looks wonderingly as I pass.
A sudden series of squeals...
The greatest show on earth
Just beyond the fence—
A mother with her hungry little pigs...
Love-patience...and love-eagerness.

Ambling on, I, too, am eager
Music of water, trilling
Over stones of every tone and color.
Lilies waltzing softly, where
The lights are dimmed.

My breast is full of sustenance;
My ears ring with music,
Music greater than Verdi.
I have drunk of the wine of Creation,
Yet I must go on...and on, down the road.
I must see the extent of my estate.

What great artist has been at work today?
What colors!
What majesty in the trees,
What sweet temper in the eyes of that colt.
What sublime grace
In the dip of that hawk.
What rounding of the hills.
What slopes of corn,
What prairies of wheat.
I pity Pluto
In his dark caverns of
No life.

I come to the brow of a hill.
Horizons of wonder.
Nearby tufts of clover,
Bees, heads-foremost in the blossoms.
Locust groves...what is so peaceful
As a grove of locust trees?
On every hand, daisies,
Nodding "Good morning, good morning!"
Rail-fences, zig-zagging along
To keep me company.
My mind goes back for a moment
To a day when a great man
Split rails.

I come to the river.
I am leg-tired but not weary;

Never weary.
A bank of grass invites me
And I accept its hospitality
Flying white ships
And black-hulled freighters
Make their way across a sea of blue.
I am strong...I feel the milk of earth
Seeping into my veins.
I am great! It is mine! All mine!
I close my eyes in warm sleep.

I awake! the sun is behind me.
I hear a native calling to his cows.
Cows must be milked at eventide;
They must give that up that, in which, in the making,
They found so much enjoyment.

My steps find their way homeward.
Things animate are seeking rest.
The brook is singing... and its song
Is like the song of the nightingale,
Comforting, dreamy night music.
The lilies are retired from the ball;
Only the wood-nymphs dance,
Silently.

I am home...Night is come.
Oh the ineffable nobility of night.
Yellow orb lighting the throne.
Starry crown...untarnishable.
Night...forever-crowned night.
What jewels...Vega, Altair, Spica;
What clusters...Virgo, Cygnus, Lyra.
It is mine! All mine!

Sycamore Hollow

Would you see Eden in its blissful day?
Then come with me to where the clean winds play;
Where sweet-lipped rivulets kiss as they run,
And nude young sycamores bathe in the sun.

The Little Miami

Your shores are the altars
Where
Half-clad, flood-stricken willows
Bend to their beads
At evening orisons.

Locust Trees

I never hear the poets sing
About a locust tree,
But that young grove is whispering
The dearest songs to me.

The bards have sung of hoary oaks
Withstanding years of storm,
But locust trees are like the folks
Whose simple hearts are warm.

Here, there, and everywhere they stand,
On hill and meadow's edge,
I almost feel their welcoming hand
Before I gain the ridge.

"We're just plain trees," they seem to say,
"We're not much to the eye,
It's little shade we give in May,
And little in July."

But give me just a grassy plot
Beneath such friendly shade;
I'll gather sonnets from the spot
Where locust leaves have played.

Empty Castle

This is the castle in the wood
That I have sought so long,
From which I heard profoundest joy
Proclaimed in morning song.

And now through branches bare I see
The castle in decay;
At last I've found the scene of all
The melodies in May.

The casement seat is brown as rust,
The shielding leaves are dead;
There's no enchantment in the wood,
The singers are all fled.

Jim Crow

They've set a bounty on your head,
Old Jim Crow;
A quarter is the price, they said,
For dyeing your black plumage red,
Old Jim Crow.

You come with empty craw each morn,
Old Jim Crow,
And fill it up with Hiram's corn;
And soon you might raid Hiram's barn,
Bad Jim Crow.

You're not a songbird of the state,
Old Jim Crow;
You never serenade your mate,
A raucous cry has been your fate,
Poor Jim Crow.

But ebon plumes and raucous voice
For you was your Creator's choice;
And back, almost, when time began,
Your forbears fed a holy man...
Old Jim Crow.

Twilight Threnody

There's something wrong with the world tonight,
Or woefully wrong with me,
When tired crows in their hazy flight
Dispel a mundane song of delight
And leave me to threnody.

All day they feasted on bits of gold,
Small grains that the huskers lost;
And now they hie to their feathered fold—
While I, who frantically bought and sold,
Can count but the futile cost.

For Richard Halliburton

You wistful waves of Hellespont,
Cease your weeping;
Impulsive youth must have its hour
Of quiet sleeping.

You wandering winds of Libya's plain,
Hush your sighing;
Your nomad lover will return
With colors flying.

You grey clouds under Matterhorn,
Flash your sabres;
For he has reached the royal road
To higher labors.

In Memoriam

The Adventurer is home;
Home from his coral-studded bays,
From azure nights and emerald days;
The Adventurer is home.

The Adventurer is home;
Long shall the eagle watch in vain,
Long shall the mourning dove complain—
Now he is home.

The Adventurer is home;
Home from the friendly world he knew—
We keep the gates where he passed through
On his way home.

Fleets Flying

Wild geese from the Northland,
Wild geese winging high;
Music from a thousand
Harp-strings in the sky.
As I stand and marvel
At God's creatures there
I remember other
Wedge-wise fleets in air.

Not for them the bayou,
Nor the shielding sedge
Where the great geese garner
And the young geese fledge;

Not for them the guidance
Of a Father's Hand...
But for them...blind flying,
From their fatherland.

Prayer

God, give them Nelson!
God, send them Drake!
Peace was their error,
Trust their mistake.

Now they are threatened
By vulture and snake...
God, send them Nelson!
God, give them Drake!

Cause For Thanksgiving

Only a bowl of cool water,
Only a handful of bread;
This shall be feast for the sparrow
Though the last river run red.

Only a leaf and a raindrop,
Only a beam from a star;
God, I have cause for thanksgiving
Though the whole world be at war.

The Task

There is the hill I must climb, I said,
The appointed task for the morrow;
So without delay at the break of day
I'll start, whether joy or sorrow.

The peak is as high as the heart's intent,
And the road is as wide or narrow;
And if joy I'd know in the sunset glow,
Mt heart must be stout tomorrow.

My Windows

What's wrong with my windows,
For nothing seems clear;
Why even the poplars
Grotesquely appear.

The moon-man is scowling,
The stars wear a veil;
The clouds are all scudding
Like ships under sail.

The hills in the distance
Fall strangely away;
And strange, how they beckon
My dreams all astray.

Oh, well, since my windows
Must fail me tonight,
I'll cleanse them tomorrow
And let in the light.

Easter Morning In An Old Churchyard

Here is no bell pealing,
No vaulted tower;
Only the crumbling walls...
And a spring flower.

No prayer is heard,
No audible word;
Only the wind singing,
And harebells ringing.

April has come again
To this ancient shrine,
Breaker of bread...
Pourer of wine.

Hedges

Strange vistas everywhere
Greet the curious eye;
Wide lawns are now laid bare
To every passerby.

Last summer, hedges tall
Hid the flowers from me;
Why cultivate a wall
Where vision ought to be.

Did April then design
Her black frost to show
That every garden's mine
Wherever gardens grow?

You, in your house of shades,
Come and take the sun,
Look past your balustrades
And see what April's done.

Your hedge no longer towers,
Darkening your door;
Do come and see the flowers
You have not seen before.

The Hole in the Roof

There's a little round hole in my neighbor's roof
Down near the eaves;
Where the sparrows have hidden a love-nest within,
Mostly of leaves.

From my window I watched how the whole thing was done
Right from the start;
They kept working away with a tremulous wing
And fluttering heart.

But the roof of a neighbor should be my concern,
And I am perplexed;
Twixt the rain and the sparrows I'm sure I don't know
What to do next.

I should feel rather small if my neighbor just smiled
In friendly reproof,
And decided October perhaps is the time
For mending a roof.

So my conscience is clear and the sparrows are safe
In their love-nest;
I shall not have to sit by my window today
In guilty unrest.

Yellow Dandelions

My neighbor tills his own back yard
And looks askance at mine;
He spades and spades till I've a fear
He'll dislocate his spine.

Two rows of corn and two of beans,
Tomatoes round the edge;
Red peppers, kale, and cabbages,
And rhubarb by the hedge.

Some day this summer I expect
To hear my neighbor say;
"Well sir, I never saw such beans
As those I picked today."

Then, too, he'll come and rave about
His golden bantam corn;
And all the while his eye will roam
Across my yard in scorn.

He'll note the yellow dandelions
That toss their heads about,
And hint, perhaps, they choke the grass,
I ought to dig them out.

And by and by his busy wife
Will come with apron heaped
With samples from their garden plot,
To share the things they reaped.

They'll think that I'll be sorry for
The lazy days I spent
While they were sowing corn and beans...
And maybe I'll repent.
But let them think and work away,
I'll just sit musedly
Until such time when little heads
Wave golden curls at me.

To the Boys of the Reading School

You robust lads of Reading
Who show your tousled hair
In warm or wintry weather
On rainy days or fair,
Who proudly sit at classes,
Or battle for your school:
Fight fairly for the pigskin,
But let the sheepskin rule.

You'll learn of things your sires
Had never hoped to know;
For them the factory whistles
Still late and early blow.

Their little world was bounded
By sloping hills and streams;
And all that knowledge willed them
Was labor...and their dreams.
And you were all they dreamed of
And labored for with pride,
Determined you shall have, lads,
A brighter world and wide.

To a Girl of Nine—or Ten Perhaps

Child, child,
heart-free, foot-wild;
hair, spun of gold in the sun;
eyes flashing
like raindrops splashing;
Child, sweet:
If you should meet someone whose eyes
are searching the skies,
bring him to Earth
on your wings of mirth;
dance for him, sing for him,
let your voice ring for him;
he will remember that moment
of rapture, through the years
that are long...child, child,
go with your song
through sunshine and rain...
but child, child, remember
to pass here again.

On Mother's Day

I love to watch a little child
Run to its mother's arms
From dreadful things like worms and bugs
And summer's thunder storms;

But I once knew a little boy
Who, when those fears came on,
Had no such haven where to flee,
No breast to hide upon.

No tender hand to cool his cheek
When he with fever lay;
No one to tuck the covers in
And wait to hear him pray.

No understanding eyes to beam
Upon his every mood;
He never heard his mother say
How bright he was and good.

That little boy is grown up now,
Despite life's fitful storms,
Still, on each Mother's day he sighs
For her protecting arms.

Could I Remember

Today they sing of that great love
Which never I have known;
I hear its praise on every lip,
But, mute, I stand alone.

Could I remember weary steps,
Eyes full of tenderness,
Soft touch of hands that early gave
Their feeble last caress—

Could I but faintly recollect
One low-hummed lullaby,
I should no longer then be mute...
My praise would reach the sky.

Old Man at the Organ

He sits there lost in reveries,
Murmuring some old, old rhyme;
His fingers move across the keys
Painfully, while the slow time
Is like the beating of his heart.

Patriarchal Hill

Up slowly from the edge of town
The old hill climbs and then looks down;
It gazes there with pensive eyes
Upon the witless and the wise.

It sees the things the children do—
The children up to seventy-two;
Forgives the errors of their ways,
And prays for them more perfect days.

Alone On a Summer Night

Neighbors' voices on the evening air,
While Vega beams;
I wonder if the neighbors care
How Vega gleams.

Jovial laughter and the clink of glass...
But I'm content;
The ale that sparkles on the grass
Is heaven-sent.

My Oriental Tapestry

Last night I met old Abraham
Outside the gates of Ur;
Also, a dark Arabian
Who reeked with wine and myrrh.

They bartered silks and wine and jade,
They bartered goats and sheep;
Flung silver to a Chaldean maid
While Ur lay fast asleep.

Last night while smoldering camp-fires lay
Beneath the desert skies,
A galloping horseman on his way
Flung sand into my eyes.

June Night

Now June returns again and brings him home
From moon and sovereign star to lesser light;
Though regal Cygnus glides across the dome
The firefly holds the poet's gaze tonight.

Converted

I'm going to walk with morning!
Living too much with night
Has dimmed my eyes to scorning
Things that glow with light.

I need the cool immersion
In pools of morning dew;
I feel a strange conversion
Inspiring me anew.

What star can match the beauty
Of faces in the sun
All wreathed in hope and duty
When day is just begun?

I'm going to walk with morning!
I'm going to start today!
And catch the light that's burning
In hearts along my way.

Hope

I see it in the turmoil
Of the city's busy street,
I feel it in the pulses
Of the tiny stems of wheat;
I hear it in the chorus
Of the sparrows at the dawn...
But oh, the face at twilight
With the written word thereon!

Question

On each silver bole of the beechwood
Is a lover's graven token;
And I wonder while strolling the beechwood—
Is the pledge of that love unbroken?

To a Young Girl

Guard well your treasured gems, my dear,
Thieves are abroad tonight,
Who may at any hour appear
And find to their delight
The jewels in your eyes that play
In every smile a part...
And, for a charm, I heard them say,
They'd wear a stolen heart.

In Libra's Hands

The flower's too lovely for the bee
That comes to steal its smelling;
Then you are like a flower to me
In heaven's garden dwelling.

And I am but a bit of earth
That time long since has harrowed,
While you attest an angel's birth
That time has subtly borrowed.

Comparison

Fair waxen flower, wrought by human hand,
Your symmetry remains as seasons fly;
Yet whispering summer winds have never fanned
That tinted cheek which pleases well the eye.

Oh, sweet wild rose perfuming yonder glade,
You are of God's own handiwork a part;
Though soon your fragrance dies and blushes fade,
You leave eternal imprint on the heart.

Preference

Autumn leaves are beautiful,
Yellow, brown, and red;
Autumn leaves are beautiful,
But autumn leaves are dead.

Nothing in the arms of earth
Can for aye survive;
Oh, within the arms of earth
How sweet to be alive!

Beauty in a sepulcher
Holds a deadly charm...
Turn then from the sepulcher
And kiss red lips and warm.

November Days

You breezy, warm, November days,
Fair subjects of a thousand lays,
Think you I know not what to follow
When leaves lie carpeting the hollow?

It seems but yesterday to me
When those dead leaves adorned a tree;
A now too lonely tree and gaunt,
Lifting its naked arms in want—
Like some old man outside his door,
Grieving for days that are no more.

I wonder if the yellow leaves
Keep warm the spot whereon he grieves.

Solitude

I met a spirit in the wood,
The spirit of sweet solitude;
Wherever I turned or tried to pass
She danced before me on the grass;
Her beauty so encompassed me
I could not from her presence flee.
Her feet were nimble as the faun's,
Her eyes were bright as summer dawns;
Her music was the silver tones
That tinkled over pearly stones.
She led me to her woodland shrine
And poured for me her rarest wine;
I stole the kiss she fain would give,
Embraced her, and began to live.

Twilight in the Dust-Bowl

Here is a burnished waste
That once was grasses
And salt licks
And cool morasses...

While far away, the mountains,
Like a herd of bison,
Arch their backs
Against the horizon.

Blind Choice

I spaded up a garden plot,
I turned the moist earth over.
And brought to light a crawling lot
Of worms from under cover.

I gave to them a world of light,
I split their caves asunder;
But how they squirmed back into night...
And lost a world of wonder.

This Small Earth

A fisherman in Provincetown,
A banker in St. Paul;
An actor down in Hollywood—
A bright star overall.

A continent is not so wide
But that a star may see
Each spark of native hope that glows
In you, and you, and me.

To One Who Erred

Copernicus, if you could see,
Yon moon tonight that beams on me,
You would at once your plan erase
And give to her your honored place.

In the grand ballroom of the sky
She holds the grace of every eye;
And every little dancing star
Is humbled as we mortals are.

September Nights

Hear the chorus of the night,
Late summer's wild delight:
Katydids up in the trees,
Crickets on the lawn...
Listen, ere they're gone.

Soon a frosty moon shall rise
To dominate the skies;
Silence will pervade the trees...
Silence of the dead...
When summer nights are fled.

Futility

Orion climbs the eastern hill
To stalk the Scorpion;
But he shall climb in vain until
The course of time is run.

And Caesar's bloody sword lies still
Beneath the common dust
Of some forgotten plain or hill,
A futile thing of rust.

Orion

Primeval man could only number you
Among his transient gods,
And bruise his naked body on the rocks
In humble supplication.

An inspiration to the poet through the ages-
There seemingly is nothing new to say.
And nothing new to feel...

Yet, here stand I, another watcher of the skies,
Conscious of the soul within me
Surging and swelling for the utterance
To describe a most familiar sign
That heralds winter.

Winter Friends

A winter tree, and a lone crow crying...
Do they not know the winter's dying?
Dear smitten friends of field and wood,
Keep up your high-born fortitude
A few more days, for signs are here
That succor, sustenance is near;
The trackless alabaster plain
Will crumble in an April rain;
And Earth will spread a sumptuous feast
For tree and man and bird and beast.

A Resolution

All day I watched the strong-winged winter crows
Cleaving the steeled air with machine-like blows;
They asked no quarter from the winter skies,
The joy of life resounded in their cries.

Tonight I am resolved to play my part
In life's great drama with a singing heart;
And if the face of the earth grows dark and chill
I shall remember crows above a hill.

Lamps at Yule-Tide

The myriad lamps that through the windows glow
Were lighted twenty centuries ago,
When dark it was in Bethlehem, and there
Gleamed not a friendly candle anywhere;
When Mary at the darkest hour gave birth
To One Who lights the darkest realms of earth.

The Listeners

Voices singing Christmas carols,
Christmas carols on the air;
And the listeners draw together
From the Land of Everywhere.

From the realm of nights and mornings,
Where the day affords retreat;
Where the sunrise gives a promise
That the moon and stars repeat.

Carol, carol, brother, sister,
Then go back to home and hearth,
And remember in your feasting
Those who, chartless, roam the earth.

What Shall We Do With the Christmas Tree

What shall we do with the Christmas tree
When the lights burn dim
And the needles die,
When the branches droop and the children sigh,
Then what shall we do with the Christmas tree?

We set it there with our eager hands
When our hearts are full
And our spirits high
With the joy of greeting each passerby,
And the thoughts of a little one's heart and hands.

And will we remember that eve in our hearts
In the days to come
As the seasons fly;
Will our Christmas tree on the ash heap lie,
Or will it, transplanted, be found in our hearts?

On Seeing a Weed in December

Ah, the weed my sickle failed to cleave,
Now stooped and bent, a weather-beaten thing;
An old, old lady, left behind to grieve
Her futile hours of eager blossoming.

But bravely, still, she strives to breast the storm,
The harsh December wind that bends her low;
Her brood of seed beneath her, snug and warm...
Her secret hope they may like roses grow.

My heart is glad the sickle's ruthless blade
Was cheated of its prey — and so when spring
Returns I'll use the friendly hoe and spade
And cultivate a poor weed's blossoming.

Truth and Beauty

I have stood at Beauty's hand
In a cold and sterile land,
And beheld in her the power
Making of each clod a flower.

I can see her smiling eyes
In the stars that nightly rise;
At her touch the frozen moon
Melts the unyielding heart in June.

There is simple truth indeed
In the shunned and lowly weed,
Yet what mysteries to learn,
What new beauty to discern.

Give me truth, but this I know —
Beauty leads where I must go;
Though her touch must ofttimes flee
From the truth that stifles me.

Words and Weeds

I wonder why the weed
Grows faster than the flower,
And thrives as well indeed
In shade or sunny bower.

No matter how I toil
To keep it underfoot
It seems most any soil
Will help its upward shoot.

I guess the answer's here
Within this verse of mine...
The words I hold most dear
Come slowly into line.

Life

Life is the harvest abundant;
Broad are its meadows and sweet;
Many the bins for the storing...
Why then the laggard feet?

Go to the field at the morning
Brightly, as goes the sun,
See how the binder embraces
Beauty and life as one.

Earth and all her children,
Sky and its wonder-chart;
Bread and meat for the body—
Meat and bread for the heart.

Twilight Shores

Wind-drunken crows in the willows
Over the twilight shore;
Patiently plodding, the river
Goes on to forevermore.

Deaf is my ear to the highway...
River and wind and tree
Ring with remembered music
That fashioned the heart of me.

Music that never shall perish,
Heart that shall never hold fast—
Though the man's twilight surrounds him,
The boy is his beacon at last.

Wind-drunken crows in the willows,
Old as the hills they must be;
Patient and peaceful, the river
Flows on to eternity.

About the Author

Samuel L. Schierloh was the Poet-Postmaster and Artist of Mount Washington, Ohio. He was born in 1889 in Reading, Ohio. He served with the United States Navy from 1906 to 1910, sailing aboard the USS Tennessee as a signalman. He then embarked on a brief career as a tailor. He entered the Postal Service in 1928 and retired in 1951. At the time of his retirement he had been superintendant of the Mt. Washington Post Office for about seven years.

Bowler, golfer, and painter, his favorite avocation was the composition of poems. He was co-founder of the Anderson Hills Poetry Club and member of the Greater Cincinnati Writers club for 38 years.

He published two books of poems, "Grains That the Huskers Lost" and "Down the Bright Sea."

In addition, he was author of an historical series for the Mt. Washington Press, and for a few years, poetry editor for the Press.

He served as secretary of the Mt. Washington Merchants Bowling League for about 20 years.

Mr. Schierloh was president of the Writers League for several terms, and past vice president of the Ohio Poetry Day Association. He was a member of the Mt. Washington Methodist Church.

He and his wife, Mrs. Sarah Leona Noon Schierloh, were married for 57 years. Samuel Schierloh passed away In October, 1968.



Samuel Schierloh (lower right) aboard the USS Tennessee, ca. 1908

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